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SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CORRECTING MARKING PARA 3)

SENSITIVE
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DEPT FOR DRL, INL, AND EUR/SCE, NSC FOR BRAUN, USUN FOR
DREW SCHUFLETOWSKI, USOSCE FOR STEVE STEGER

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SUBJECT: KOSOVO: DACI AND HIS SUPPORTERS CREATE A
"DEMOCRATIC LEAGUE" OF THEIR OWN

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11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Former Kosovo Assembly president Nexhat Daci and his supporters announced January 12 the creation of a new political "entity" called the Democratic League (LD). Daci told reporters the Democratic League will be "a continuation of the party created and run by former President Ibrahim Rugova." The group claims to have the support of half of the LDK electorate and announced it will form a new caucus in the Kosovo Assembly. While it is doubtful it would join with the opposition to secure the needed votes to overthrow the government, the new caucus could deny the government the 61-person quorum necessary for Assembly votes. A Daci-led caucus could complicate Assembly adoption of the enabling legislation that will be required by the final status package. The group could also cause problems in some local assemblies, where the LDK has narrow majorities. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) Former Kosovo Assembly president Nexhat Daci and his supporters held the initial meeting of their new political entity on January 12 in Pristina. The group calls itself the "Democratic League" and will have its headquarters in the Velania section of central Pristina. After its founding meeting, Daci told reporters the Democratic League will be "a continuation of the party created and run by former President Ibrahim Rugova." The group will hold its first electoral convention on February 17, at which 501 delegates will elect its president, as well as 101 members of a Steering Council and 25 members of a Presidency. At today's meeting the group established three committees that will prepare for the convention. The move ends weeks of speculation about Daci's next steps after losing the party leadership election to President Fatmir Sejdiu. According to press reports, the Women's Forum of the LDK led by Minister of Public Services Melihate Termkolli will not join Daci's Democratic League, but Sejd Tolaj, the head of the LDK Youth Forum announced that he and an unspecified number of others

from the youth forum will. According to press reports, after Tolaj's statement, representatives of 31 of 36 LDK Youth League branches declared their continued support for Sejdiu.

13. (SBU) The current governing coalition has 68 seats in the Kosovo Assembly (including the Daci camp); 61 are required for a simple majority and a decision-making quorum within the 120-member Kosovo Assembly. At today's meeting, five other MPs joined Daci, so it appears he has the six MPs required under OSCE rules to establish a caucus within the Assembly. These defectors probably will not be able to bring down the government since a vote of no-confidence also requires enough votes to select a new prime minister and cabinet, as well as the approval of the incumbent President (Sejdiu). However, the new caucus could join with the opposition to add to the government's recent difficulties in forming the Assembly quorum.

14. (SBU) At the December 9, 2006 convention, Daci lost the race to the current Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu, by the surprisingly narrow vote of 189 to 160. His troubles magnified when Sejdiu presented his list of names for the party Steering Council, containing very few individuals from the Daci camp. After a brawl instigated by Daci supporter Gani Geci, the convention re-convened and approved a list of 107 Steering Council members, including only a handful belonging to the Daci camp.

15. (SBU) The LDK division could also be reflected in the composition of some Municipal Assemblies, where LDK has a narrow majority. The Gjilan Municipal Assembly is already facing such difficulties, although Gjilan mayor Xhemajl Hyseni, a strong Daci supporter, has not managed to gather the needed quorum for a session. Seven Sejdiu supporters in the Gjilan municipal assembly have joined the opposition in refusing to take part in a session in which Hyseni intends to extend the contract of the current CEO, also a Daci supporter. The media has speculated that Pristina's current mayor, a Sejdiu supporter, may also be in danger, as Daci's team has the support of enough municipal assembly members to

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remove him if they cooperate with the opposition. Similar problems could also occur in Viti and Ferizaj municipalities, also Daci strongholds.

16. (SBU) An expert from the OSCE's office for political party services told us that she does not believe that Daci's new party will be allowed to register with the its proposed "Democratic League8 name, as it is too similar to the LDK. (NOTE: According to OSCE rules, it can refuse to register a party if its proposed name is "the same as or confusingly similar to an existing party." END NOTE). The expert stressed, however, that the OSCE has not yet been approached by anyone on the matter, and has only discussed it in-house. The OSCE confirmed publicly that MPs who change parties during their tenure retain their seats in the Assembly.

17. (SBU) COMMENT: The formation of this new proto-party marks the failure of Daci's attempt to wrest control of the LDK. Regardless of its long-term prospects, the LD represents a potential complication as we move to the final status end game. Ahtisaari's package will undoubtedly contain provisions -- many controversial -- that will have to be enacted into law by the legislature. Considering the sustained effort it took to muster the votes in the Assembly to designate Turkish as an official language in Prizren, a Daci-led caucus will not make our jobs any easier. END COMMENT.

18. (SBU) U.S. Office Pristina clears this cable in its entirety for release to U.N. Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari. LASKARIS